



## From Rabbi Malkus, Head of School

### A New Signature Program - The Sharon and Jacob (z"l) Benus Social Entrepreneurship Program

This school year CESJDS launched the Sharon and Jacob (z"l) Benus Social Entrepreneurship Program, a unique and, we feel, significant way to connect our school's core value of *Tikkun Olam*/Repairing the World with important skills and habits of mind that will be essential for our graduates. This entrepreneurship and social impact program continues CESJDS' long history of educational innovation by applying the start-up spirit we see in Israel to society's most pressing challenges and connecting this work with our core Jewish values.

Our program has been developed in close partnership with Henrik Scheel who heads an educational organization called Startup Experience and has helped develop several successful social entrepreneurship programs in the San Francisco Bay Area and general entrepreneurship programs at universities and independent schools around the country. Henrik is a professor of entrepreneurship and teaches entrepreneurship courses at Harvard, Stanford, Dartmouth, UC Berkeley, Johns Hopkins, and other colleges. Our program has already seen exciting initiatives in each of our three divisions.

Throughout the divisions, students are learning about the entrepreneurial mindset, toolset, and skillset, including design thinking, problem-solving, business modeling, customer interviewing, the startup method, prototyping, and pitching. We are integrating Jewish values, texts, and philosophical reflections to explore ethical perspectives and demonstrate inspiring Jewish models of entrepreneurship and social innovation. We are fortunate that a number of CESJDS alumni are social entrepreneurs who have made a tremendous difference in the world and are available to speak to our current students. We are thrilled that this unique JK-12 program will create a curricular arc across the school focused on social entrepreneurship.

The Sharon and Jacob (z"l) Benus Social Entrepreneurship program has a number of key learning outcomes and is being presented to students in developmentally appropriate lessons from JK-12 grades. In the program, students gain:

- Real-world problem-solving experience
- Leadership and collaboration skills
- Deep research into pressing societal issues
- Business acumen as they develop and present their projects in the Upper School
- Engagement with Jewish values applied through the entrepreneurial process

In this edition of *The Lions' Roar* you will read about how our master educators are weaving the idea of being a Changemaker (what we call the program) into the Lower School curriculum. You will have an opportunity to see how entrepreneurship skills are taught in the Middle School. Finally, you will learn about the two-day Boot Camp that kicked off four months of preparation for an idea-pitch contest in January for High School students. We are thrilled about the tremendous progress we have made in launching the Sharon and Jacob (z"l) Benus Social Entrepreneurship Program and we know you will enjoy reading in depth about this innovative CESJDS initiative in the following pages of *The Lions' Roar*.



# כל הכבוד (Accomplishments)

## SCHOOL

- **The Lion's Tale** was featured in an article on *Best of SNO (School Newspapers Online)* for their election coverage.
- The 2023-2024 edition of **The Melting Pot** earned first place from the American Scholastic Press Association.
- **The Lion's Tale** and **Dimensions** yearbook are Columbia Scholastic Press Association Crown Finalists.
- **Reflections**, the CESJDS literary magazine, has been selected to receive the rank of Superior in the 2024 NCTE Recognizing Excellence in Art and Literary Magazines (REALM) program.
- **2 Middle School Robotics Teams** competed in the Potomac School VIQRC Winter Classic with one team finishing 13th out of 30 teams.
- **Middle School Mathletes** tied for second place in the January Math Meet Competition.
- **High School Margolius Family Debate Team** won third place for the third straight row in the Debate Finals.
- **Varsity Boys and Girls Cross Country teams** won the Maryland State championships.
- **Varsity Girls Volleyball** finished first in the league and won the championship for the first time since 1994.
- **Junior Varsity Girls Volleyball** made it to the PVAC championship.
- **Varsity Girls Soccer** finished second in the league and made it to the PVAC finals.
- **Middle School Boys Soccer** finished the regular season undefeated and made it to the PVAC finals.
- **Varsity Girls Basketball** won the PVAC championship.
- **JV Boys Basketball** won the PVAC championship.

## STUDENT

- **Hadriel Dayanim** (Grade 11) competed in the 2024 Metropolitan Live Classical Music Festival, hosted by the American Masters Music Awards in the grades 10-12 division and earned third place.
- **Rachel Fagin** (Grade 11) was named Girls Volleyball Tournament MVP and PVAC Player of the Year.
- **Jonathan Gordon** (Grade 11) and **Sammi Krantz** (Grade 11) were the top qualifiers for the Margolius Family Debate Team, ending the season with a record of 9-1.
- **Gigi Gordon** (Grade 12), **Ari Kitztrie** (Grade 12), and **Stella Muzin** (Grade 12) were featured in *Best of SNO* in election coverage for their *Balancing the Ballot* article.

- **Adam Nesher** (Grade 8) competed in the Scripps Regional Spelling Bee and won 6th place.
- An article written by **Isaiah Segal-Geetter** (Grade 10) for *The Lion's Tale* about CESJDS student **Ephraim Blair** (Grade 9) performing at Carnegie Hall won a *Best of SNO* award.
- **Theodore Rothenberg** (Grade 11) and **Jacob Sheib** (Grade 10) won trophies at the Wittenberge Jewish Wrestling Association tournament.
- **Lindsay Shapiro** (Grade 10) published her article, *Trips that Shaped Identity*, in *HaYidion: The Prizmah Journal*.
- **Eve Sharp** (Grade 10) won her first MoCo Track and Field Championship first place title.
- **Jonah Soffler** (Grade 10) and **Theodore Rothenberg** (Grade 11) won in their respective weight classes at the PVAC Wrestling championship tournament.
- **Nathan Szubin** (Grade 12) was the PVAC Runner of the Year and won the inaugural MD Cross Country Senior Male Athlete of the Year.
- **Cati Werbin Gradel** (Grade 12) received an award from the Office of Congressman Jamie Raskin during Hispanic Heritage Month.
- **Mia Forseter** (Grade 11), **Mali Osofsky** (Grade 10), **Eve Sharp** (Grade 10), and **Eliana Wolf** (Grade 11) finished in 3rd place for the Girls 4x800m in the MoCo Track and Field Championship.

## FACULTY

- **Melissa Andrew**, High School Biology & Ecology Teacher, spoke at the Class of 2025 *Siyyum* as the faculty speaker.
- **Aileen Goldstein**, Assistant High School Principal, and **Romi Nachman '18**, Athletic Trainer, visited The Hebrew Reali School Haifa to collaborate on an exciting new partner program.
- **Gary Prince**, Upper School Instrumental Music Teacher, led a workshop on teaching improvisation in the music classroom, leading to 12 students improvising multiple concert-level ensemble numbers for music educators across the state of Maryland.
- **Sarah Roark**, Lower School Media Center Specialist, and Rabbi Greg Harris were married.
- **Alexa Singman**, 3rd Grade Teacher, completed her Masters in Education from the American College of Education (ACE).
- **Rachel B. Van Gorden**, Graphic Designer & Marketing Operations Coordinator, won two *Graphic Design USA* awards: the 2024 American Inhouse Design Award and the 2024 American Graphic Design Award for the 2024 *Ma'ayan* Annual Campaign design. She was also featured in the October 2024 issue as one of the *GDUSA Responsible Designers To Watch*.

- **Dr. Lisa Vardi**, High School Principal, was a featured speaker at the AISGW Women Leaders Network Winter Gathering, *The Hidden Challenges of Leadership*.
- **Dr. Lisa Vardi**, High School Principal, published her article, *Kids and Tech: Responses to Jonathan Haidt in HaYidion: The Prizmah Journal*.

## ALUMNI

- **Rabbi Rachel Ain '95** spoke at the Class of 2025 graduation as the Alumni Speaker.
- **Renee Dunn '10**, founder and CEO of Amäzi Foods, a socially driven tropical fruit company, on a mission to help you Snack on Purpose, has her snacks in Whole Foods stores around the DMV.
- **Kerry Brodie '08** and Tomer Yavetz welcomed a son, Shachar Kedem.
- **Raviv Brooks '09** and Chaviva Brooks welcomed a son, Yakir Kalil.
- **Eran Friedman '08** and Carrie Friedman welcomed a son, Isaac Pope.
- **Dodie Katz '01** and Jeffrey Katz welcomed a daughter, Margalit Ashira.
- **Rabbi Michael Pollack '08** and Sofie Pollack welcomed a son, Lev Abraham Pollack.
- **Alexa Bennaim Sarfati '13** and Jason Sarfati welcomed a son, Ben Omer.
- **Eytan Layman '17** and Sigalle Bahary were married.
- **Eduardo Sverdlin '06** and Annie Snider were married.
- **Yael Green '14** and Naftali Lehrfield were engaged.
- **Sam Greenberg '09** and Hillel Friedman were engaged.
- **Carol Silber '16** and Dan Rosenzweig-Ziff were engaged.
- **Mattie Watson '20** and Sol Feder were engaged.

## COMMUNITY

- CESJDS Parent **Guy Barak** received the U.S. Legion of Merit for his exceptional work on strengthening the partnership between the U.S. Navy and Israeli Navy.
- CESJDS Parents **Rachel '01** & **Peter Federowicz** and CESJDS Grandparents **Carol & Gary Berman** were honored at the 2025 Cornerstone event at the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington for their contributions to Jewish Life and Greater Washington.
- CESJDS Parents **Ryan & Adam Munitz** shared their journey of choosing CESJDS for their Kindergarten student in *HaYidion: The Prizmah Journal*.

*Kol HaKavod!*



# Lower School Log:

## Learning to Be a Changemaker - Bringing Social Entrepreneurship to the Lower School

◆ By **Ginger Thornton**, Director of Instructional Technology

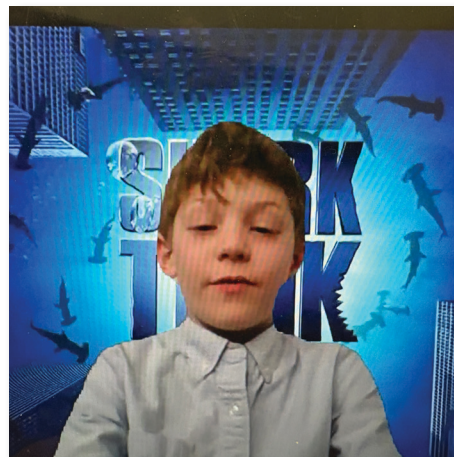


Imagine a room filled with pairs of Gurim and Kindergarten students. They have just finished hearing *A Solution for Cold Feet* read aloud, and each group is now working together to create and draw a picture of a solution to an everyday problem. What can I do if I'm bored? How can I play if it's raining? Perhaps the room is instead full of fourth graders prototyping solutions to littering in our school and community or first graders using blocks and Legos to prototype solutions for animals who need to cross roads (over, under, across, through) that pass through their habitat. These activities were just a fraction of our Lower School STEM Day. Students in every grade explored the relationship between seeing a problem and finding a solution for it as they worked to identify solvable issues in the communities to which they belong. They learned what it means to be proactive and began to see themselves as changemakers who can affect problems in the world around them, whether they were second graders

taking their cues from the book *Unselfish* or third graders promoting recycling in our school or fifth graders debating how to manage the overlap of local wild animal populations with local residential areas.

Since that first program in the fall of this school year, Lower School teachers have woven the idea of being a changemaker into various parts of our curriculum. Students in Grade 2, for example, already study what it means to be a good citizen of our various communities throughout the year. Recently, these students researched changemakers from history and created videos explaining how each person studied made a difference. Now, using what they learned from their research, they have begun brainstorming solutions to real community problems and will present their proposed solutions as part of a Shark Tank experience. These kinds of curricular connections are happening in other grades as well. 4th grade students took part in a virtual visit from CESJDS alumni Max Levitt '07, who answered questions about *Tikkun Olam*/Repairing the World through Leveling the Playing Field, the sports equipment donation nonprofit that he founded and directs. Our 5th grade students are incorporating changemaking into their *Tu Bish-vat* Environmental projects, and our entire Lower School took part in a Kindness Challenge with an emphasis on positive changemaking. As we move toward the end of this first year of our new Changemakers initiative, the CESJDS Lower School is looking forward to exciting new programs and curriculum to come.

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# Middle School Musings:

## Social Entrepreneurship & STEM in the Middle School

◆ By **Alexandra Brown**, Director of Upper School STEM



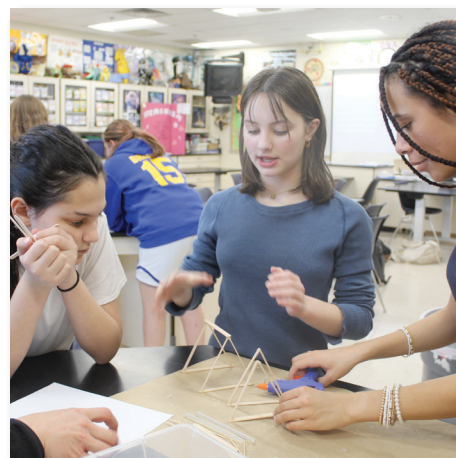
The Middle School division is using Social Entrepreneurship to empower students to make a positive impact in the world while gaining valuable skills in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math). Social Entrepreneurship is about creating innovative solutions to address societal challenges, and our students have already been introduced to the power of this concept firsthand. Middle School students learned more about the High School's Social Entrepreneurship program during Innovation Minimester. The High School team who won the recent Shark Tank competition shared their inspiration, ideas, and processes.

During our Middle School STEM Days, students participated in a challenge that incorporated Social Entrepreneurship and engineering principles. Students were presented with a scenario about a community in need and discussed how a bridge would benefit that community. They then used their engineering skills to build a bridge using the materials provided. Teams competed to see which bridge design held the most weight. This hands-on project gave students the opportunity to think critically about how engineering and social change intersect, fostering creativity and problem-solving skills.

Looking ahead, we are excited to offer a new Social Entrepreneurship elective during the 2025-2026 school year. This semester-long course will be open to interested 7th and 8th grade students. This course offers students the opportunity to make a real change in the community, living our School's value of *Tikkun Olam*/Repairing the World, while exploring the key concepts behind design and production. In this course, students will research real-world problems, brainstorm innovative solutions, and use the engineering design process to create prototypes that address those challenges. By combining their passion for making a difference with the technical skills they are learning, students will gain a deeper understanding of how they can become changemakers in their communities and beyond.

In Middle School, we are working on making mensches. We want to inspire a generation of doers. By growing Social Entrepreneurship in our division, students will develop an understanding of how their STEM skills can make a difference in making our world a better place. We look forward to seeing the amazing ideas and solutions that our students will create as they embark on their journey as social entrepreneurs!

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# High School Highlights:

## Social Venture Preserves Tradition & Values from *Dor L'Dor*

◆ By Dr. Lisa Vardi, High School Principal



We officially launched the Sharon and Jacob (z"l) Benus Social Entrepreneurship Fellowship program in the High School with a two-day Boot Camp led by Henrik Scheel, Founder and CEO of Startup Experience, on September 19, 2024. Mr. Scheel guided 17 students through the process of building new social ventures that integrated Jewish values, texts, and philosophical reflections to explore ethical perspectives and demonstrate inspiring Jewish models of entrepreneurship and social innovation.

At the end of the two-day Boot Camp, five teams presented their ideas to a panel of JDS parent-entrepreneurs for feedback. The teams then had the option to continue developing their ventures over the next four months in preparation for an idea-pitch contest in January. Guided by Matthew Landy '18, High School Social Entrepreneurship Program Coordinator, four of the original teams participated in this Shark Tank-like "event" with the winning team awarded \$1,000 seed money to continue developing their venture.

We asked the winning team, StoryBridge (now known as GoldenMemoirs), to share more about their social entrepreneurial journey. Team members include: Daniel Jacobson (Grade 11), Yedidya Milner-Gillers '25, Coby Schlactus (Grade 11), and Leo Steindecker (Grade 11).

**How did your group come up with the idea for your business, GoldenMemoirs? Please share more about the business and how it is related to the School's core value of *Tikkun Olam*.**

We were told by the leader of the program Henrik Scheel to think about problems. We identified the problem that people's life stories and legacies were being lost. We had each wanted to find a way to preserve our grandparents' legacies, but discovered severe problems: a time barrier and lack of structure and assistance. We brainstormed different solutions and decided that an AI-assisted biography would effectively solve the problem. Our business is special and reflects the School's value of *Tikkun Olam*/Repairing the World. It strengthens familial bonds as it preserves traditions and values from *Dor L'Dor*/Generation to Generation. Two of us have already created biographies through our company for our grandparents and we have witnessed firsthand how captivating and moving our product is for our families.

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**What have been the benefits and challenges of the program thus far?**

Firstly, the program taught us what entrepreneurs do: they solve problems. We learned about the start-up process, and what a business needs to succeed. It has honed our business skills, as well as helped us channel our values into a business we are passionate about. The biggest challenge has been finding time to work on the business consistently. As JDS is an extremely rigorous school, it has been tough balancing schoolwork with working on the company. Additionally, at times our business idea seems impossible, due to the large amount of work needed to create the company. The best thing to get us through these challenges is our strong belief in the business' mission.

**What are your short-term and long-term goals for your business?**

In the short term, we aim to attract new customers to our website [goldenmemoirs.ai](https://goldenmemoirs.ai) to increase sales, as well as raise money from investors. In the long term, we plan to use the money from our sales and investors to automate the product wherein we will have AI doing the interview for us, scaling us from a business that can do \$100,000 in sales to millions of dollars.

**In what ways has the school supported you in these goals?**

Our company exists purely because of the new Social Entrepreneurship program. We all had business ambitions, and this program allowed us to effectively channel these ambitions into reality. Mr. Landy has guided us through this program, being an essential mentor, and Henrik Scheel has given us the knowledge to develop our business. Additionally, through the program's ending Shark Tank, we were able to gain an early, unconditional investment into our company, which has helped fuel our initial growth.

**If someone is interested in learning more about your business, how might they be in contact with your group?**

Go to our website [goldenmemoirs.ai](https://goldenmemoirs.ai), or shoot us an email at [goldenmemoirs0@gmail.com](mailto:goldenmemoirs0@gmail.com).

# Young Alumni Turn Gratitude Into Impact: Honoring the Teachers Who Inspired Them

At CESJDS, education extends beyond the classroom — it nurtures values, leadership, and the drive to make a difference. Today, young alumni who have found professional success are using those lessons to give back, creating lasting change through social entrepreneurship and philanthropy.

Avi Felman '13, an entrepreneur and investor, established the **Munteanu STEM Fund** to honor his chemistry teacher, Ms. Daniela Munteanu. “Ms. Munteanu was my biggest champion. She saw potential in me even when I didn’t see it in myself,” Avi shared. His gift will support STEM education, ensuring that future students have the same mentorship and opportunities that shaped his own path.

Zach Roth '10, a financial leader in real estate, created the **Nick Miller Endowment for Science Education** to recognize his former teacher’s lasting impact. “Nick Miller didn’t just teach science — he taught life skills. He challenged me to think critically, work with people I didn’t always click with, and dream big. He knew I wanted to go into business and encouraged me to use my success to give back. I’ll never forget when he told me, ‘Go into business and build something meaningful — maybe even a new science wing for JDS.’ This isn’t quite a science wing, but it’s a start,” Zach said.

By channeling their professional success into meaningful philanthropy, these alumni exemplify social entrepreneurship — leveraging their resources to strengthen the community that shaped them. Their gifts ensure that CESJDS students will continue to be nurtured, challenged, and inspired for generations to come.

To learn how you can create your own legacy through an endowment gift, contact Sarah Shapiro, Director of Development, at [sshapiro@cesjds.org](mailto:sshapiro@cesjds.org) or (301) 692-4877.



## Turn the Page – Embracing a Bold Jewish Future

CESJDS Giving Week  
Begins May 4, 2025





# LEGENDS

## FROM THE LION'S DEN

CELEBRATING CESJDS ALUMNI

LEGENDS from the Lion's Den on March 30 brought the CESJDS community together for an unforgettable celebration of leadership, connection, and school spirit! Alumni, families, faculty, and students reconnected, shared stories, and honored Dr. Veronique Nussenblatt '95, the inaugural recipient of the David Topol '84 (z"l) Alumni Leadership Award. Check out the highlights from this inspiring event!



## בית מדרש צוריאל

Administrative Offices & Lower School Campus  
1901 East Jefferson Street  
Rockville, Maryland 20852

Annette M. & Theodore N. Lerner Upper School Campus  
11710 Hunters Lane  
Rockville, Maryland 20852

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- **APRIL 30**... *Yom Ha-zikaron*/Israel Remembrance Day
- **MAY 1**..... *Yom Ha-atzma-ut*/Israel Independence Day
- **MAY 4-9**.....Giving Week
- **MAY 5-9**.....Faculty & Staff Appreciation Week
- **MAY 9**.....*Dor L'Dor*
- **MAY 16**.....*Lag Ba-omer*
- **MAY 21**.....Blecher Family Arts Chai-Lights
- **MAY 23**.....EARLY DISMISSAL (LS 2:15 PM/US 2:20 PM)
- **MAY 26**.....SCHOOL CLOSED - Memorial Day
- **MAY 29**.....US Spring Concert



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